

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 477 684

JC 030 339

TITLE Invited Panel Report on the Community College: Challenges and Pathways.

INSTITUTION Center for the Study of Community Colleges, Los Angeles, CA.

PUB DATE 2002-04-00

NOTE 31p.; Transcript from Panel at the Annual Convention of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 1-5, 2002).

AVAILABLE FROM For full text: <http://www.cscconline.org/aerapaper.pdf>.

PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Educational Objectives; \*Educational Research ; \*Outcomes of Education; Transfer Programs; Two Year Colleges; Vocational Education

IDENTIFIERS \*Center for the Study of Community Colleges CA

## ABSTRACT

This document is the transcript of the "Invited Panel Report on the Community College: Challenges and Pathways," which was given at the American Educational Research Association's 2002 Convention. Panel participants included: Michael Quanty, an Institutional Researcher at Thomas Nelson Community College and the President of the Southeastern Association for Community College Research; Kevin Dougherty, a Sociologist of Education and Social Stratification and Senior Research Associate at the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University; Deborah Bragg, an Associate Professor at the University of Illinois; Steve Katsinas, a prominent community college researcher at the University of Toledo; and Barbara Townsend, a Professor of Higher Education at the University of Missouri, Columbia. The panel members introduced themselves, spoke about how they came to become researchers in and of community colleges, and then discussed at length some of the challenges, roadblocks, and pathways to conducting research about community colleges. Panelists then took questions from the audience, and concluded by discussing some of the gaps in current community college literature as well as possibilities for future research on two-year colleges. (CB)

***Invited Panel Report on the  
Community College: Challenges and  
Pathways (AERA 2002 Convention)***

Center for the Study of Community Colleges

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**INVITED PANEL REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE:  
CHALLENGES AND PATHWAYS  
AMERICAN EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION  
2002 CONVENTION**

- Michael Quanty [MQ]: I'm at Thomas Nelson Community College. I'm also the president of the Southeastern Association for Community College Research. Like a lot of people in community college research, I got into it by accident—it was the first job I got out of graduate school. I had no idea of what community colleges were; no idea of what institutional research was. I had an excellent mentor in Elaine Tate over at Johnson County Community College and she got me really interested in it and I carried that over to Thomas Nelson and I've been in it for 25 years or so.

- Hi, I'm Kevin Dougherty [KD]. I'm a sociologist of education and social stratification and those are crucial in informing [you as to] why I got interested in the community college. Sociologists are always very interested in the phenomena of how social inequality and social stratification is transmitted. We're therefore very interested in instances where we see social class, or race, or gender differences in some phenomenon, particularly in phenomena as central as education. So the finding that working class and minority and female students are considerably more likely to go on to a community college, than are there reverse—whites, males, etc.—would be something that immediately attracts the attention of a sociologist because we've got an interest in saying "Does this produce inequalities farther down the stream"?

In fact, what happened was [that] a series of studies began to appear by sociologists and others, indicating that students attending a community college, all other things being equal and pursuing a bachelor's degree, were considerably more likely to achieve that BA than if they had gone directly to a four-year school. That finding was stated in very preliminary, and somewhat rough form by Jerome Caribel. That finding interested me greatly because of my training, but at the same time I wasn't absolutely convinced about the explanation about *how* that result got produced. I thought process that was being advanced—the way he was using cooling-out theory—I wasn't convinced by the mechanism he was describing, though I was thinking that end-result he was describing was well founded, and my own research seemed to indicate it.

So, I set it as my task to try to [determine], 1) whether the end result he describing did occur, 2) could we come up with a more convincing explanation of how it did occur, and he had provided an explanation of how the community college arose given these effects. I wasn't convinced by that explanation, [so] I decided I wanted to pursue how we might provide what I thought was a better grounded explanation of the rise of the vocationalization of the community college and that set the agenda of my research for the next ten years.

Deborah Bragg [DB]: I'm an Associate Professor at the University of Illinois. And I, like other members of this panel, will say that I didn't plan to be a community college researcher. Somehow I got to this point—I'll make this brief. I started my career

teaching junior high school and I was a consumer and family studies teacher. That was very hard work, very hard work. I quickly decided to back to graduate school and specialize in adult education. From there my interest in postsecondary education has grown, but I've continued to have an interest in vocational and technical education. One of the things that I learned in graduate school at Ohio State quickly, as I began to study the community college, and similar to Kevin, there were certain ideas that intrigued me and encouraged me to begin to study certain problems and one of them, early on, was my reading on terminal education. I found that idea offensive and I continue to find that idea offensive and really prompted my dissertation research, which was a study of postsecondary participation patterns and completion of students enrolled in postsecondary vocational-technical education, who are part of the NLS72 data set.

I studied many of those same concepts that have continued to be studied about how students enter, drop-out, complete or don't complete programs, and in fact how students who received AAS degrees did in fact transfer. And that study, I completed 17 years ago, so it's been a long time and we continue to see those patterns and I think many of the people in this room have done research in this area now and have continued to develop these concepts in much deeper and richer ways than I certainly did in my dissertation.

As I say, Barbara asked us to share a little bit about our research and I continue to study a number of lines related to postsecondary vocational/technical education, including the community college's role in contract and customized training and evaluation. [In] models related to that, I have studied alternative outcomes and outcomes assessment that's used particularly to address how vocational/technical programs have tried to respond to federal legislation. I've studied work-based learning programs of many different types in the two-year college setting. And I've done a series of longitudinal studies, and other studies on tech-prep and technical preparation programs for the U.S. Department of Education for the past 11, 12 years.

Steve Katsinas: I have a 16 year old son and he's told me already he would never want to do what I do, but I wasn't offended because nobody at age 16 I've ever met has said that they someday that they want to be doing research on community colleges, so I'm not offended by that. I got in this game also in a round about way. I did not take the community college course in my doctoral program. I got interested in it though when I did a doctoral dissertation on access of Hispanics to higher education in Illinois and found basically 50 to 60% of all minorities in U.S. higher ed are clustered in the community college, and [in] Illinois it was 65%. In '84-'85, 28 students transferred from the seven city of Chicago colleges to [the University of Illinois] Urbana-Champaign, 32 transferred the other way the same year. That caused me to ask some questions.

[Eventually] I trailed my wife, who took a tenure line at the University of Alabama and ran an institute of higher education there and that's where I got into community colleges. I visited all 41 two-year institutions at that time in Alabama, about 38 of which had a George C. Wallace Building, 14 of which had a Lurlene Wallace Building—she was governor too. I wrote an article about Wallace's role in starting that system, [and I] became very interested in what the colleges were and were not doing in with regard to

economic development. [I] found a lot of these little technical colleges were offering programs to train people, largely Black women, for careers as seamstresses for jobs that no longer existed in a textile industry that had already gone and that really got into my craw and affected me for a long time.

[I] wrote a monograph about economic development and community colleges that's led to some interest in a book on rural community colleges that I'm working on, and some work on classifications of community colleges. I believe community colleges are interesting because they're in the middle—they receive some local funding. If you know what's happening at that level, you have a pretty decent idea of what's happening across the entire sweep of the educational system and the forces that work at K-12 often apply to community colleges. In the last year, I've just finished editing a monograph of the proceedings of a conference we had at North Texas in honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of [the existence of] community colleges in America, we had the three living former presidents of the AACC and the current on there. It was the only time in the centenary year of the community colleges that they were all in the same room at the same time. I'm finishing my work on classifications research and I'm finishing a chapter for Barbara Townsend's *New Directions* work on teacher certification. I'll talk later about some of the challenges I've had working with rural community colleges.

Barbara Townsend [BT]. When I was in high school, I desired to be a junior college—that's what they were called back then—faculty member because to me, that would have been the height of professional ambition for me, but I became a secondary school teacher and lasted for one year. Then several years later—twists and turns—I did end up teaching at a community college and I taught developmental English. I had taught developmental English at a four-year school, so I thought I understood the concept. I had taken, in my master's program, one course in education and it was on the junior college. So, I thought I knew what teaching at the community college would be like, but boy it was really different! I had students who would tell that “the” was a verb and really mean it. I was really frustrated and I was trying to figure out “What kind of a place is this”? This is supposed to be higher education but boy, this just doesn't seem like higher education to me. So I was struggling to understand the institution and I read Burton Clark's *The Open Door College*, and it really helped me understand the institution a lot more.

I started going to William & Mary in a doctoral program, and I aspired to be a community college president. I sought administrative positions and always ended up being a bridesmaid, but never a bride. So I ended up actually becoming a visiting assistant professor in higher education and now I am, many, many years later a professor of higher education. But I chose to do research on the community college because they tell you to research what you know--well, I knew it environmentally—and also research what you [want to] know more about. So I did my dissertation on faculty preferences for roles and directions of the Virginia community college system because I used to teach at Thomas Nelson along with Mike—that's one of our connections.

I continued to try to figure out its institutional distinctiveness and I've written some stuff on that. I do a lot of work now on transfer education, including the transfer of AAS students that Deb Bragg talked about. I think the transfer mission is a very fluid mission. I guess if I have any purpose in life, it's to help people appreciate the community college and to understand the complexity of the transfer function. So in my work at the university, I get to advise some of the top level administrators about community colleges because they're so misunderstood by a lot of four-year institutions, particularly the elite one's. One of my latest research endeavors is that I am co-editing with Jan Ignash a monograph on the role of teacher education in community colleges and Steve has a chapter in that.

Let me ask the audience here, how many of you work in community colleges? Okay, for the record we have six hands, great. How many of you do research about the community college? We have more hands—eleven people. And I think our audience is maybe 18 people or so. Okay great. It's wonderful to have you here, both as practitioners, researchers.

**Right now, what we'll give our thoughts about and then we'll ask for yours is what do you see as challenges or roadblocks to doing research about the community college?**

**-MQ:** At the risk of getting kicked off of the panel real quick, the first roadblock I see is the idea that there is something called 'the community college'. I think community college is very—probably more than any other segment of higher education—we run from very small institutions with 500, 600 students, to mega-sized places with 50 or 60,000 students. So there's quite a range. Also, community colleges are very proud of their role as community colleges, so they define their roles based on their community. So it's not one mission fits all. There's a lot of variation in the control, whether it's state systems or local control. I worked at Johnson County Community College where it got most of its funding through local funding. At Thomas Nelson, we get very little in local funding and it's mostly state supported. There's a big difference in the level of support you get and the way you go about getting that support and who you are accountable to. So I think we need to start looking at community colleges as a very complex system.

The second roadblock I see from my perspective is with the idea of on community colleges research, versus research in them. I was struck by the fact that--I went first, but everybody else had a real good reason why they got interested in doing research on community colleges, I got thrust into a situation to where I was doing it in the community college so I'm probably less of a scholar of community colleges than anybody else here. But I do a lot of research in my community college that's different in that it's very pragmatic, very oriented to solving little problems, or big problems, but they're kind of specific to the institution. The conference we just had for the Southeaster Association of Community College Research—we had some presidents there talking about their expectations. And one of them, Frank Freedman of Piedmont, Virginia, said he needs three things—he wants to know the things we do well, things we need to improve, and things we need to anticipate. Now these were things he needed to anticipate in



Charlottesville, Virginia—not broad, scholarly themes, but very practical, very pragmatic, and sort of down to earth.

The third one I'll talk about is probably really going to get me thrown out of the room, and this is one I call the unholy alliance between graduate schools of education and community college administrators. We have a system where in order to advance in the community college; you need to have a "Dr." in front of your name. A lot of people go back to school, like Barbara said, get a doctorate so they can move up in the educational leadership. Part of what they have to do is do some research. Most of them hate doing the research, they try to get through it—it's punching their ticket as they describe it—things of that nature. They come to my office and say "How can I get through this in the most painless way possible"? So they do that, they get their dissertation, and they don't want to see research again—they don't want to talk about it, they don't want to look at it, and they don't want to understand it. So they become the people who make the decisions and all they know is that they had to do research once so they could do a job that meant something and I think it breeds a kind of distance and contempt for the whole idea. I'll talk about some solutions I have for that later.

-[KD]: I think one problem I'd like to start with and I think it affects a lot of research on the community college, and I think that is that there's a major tendency on the part of, let's call them research elites—those who fund research, or could fund research, or could publicize research on the community college—that there's a tendency to dismiss the community college as not being of great interest. They won't, therefore, publicize results on it; they won't fund research on it. When I first proposed my dissertation topic in the sociology department at Harvard, I was fascinated by the reaction I got from a number of people, which was "Why would you want to study that"? And I said, "Well, we're talking about, perhaps, the single most numerous kind of institution—postsecondary institution—in the United States". And the next response was "Well, I don't know anybody who has gone to one". And clearly, this settled the issue for them. But that, I think, is illustrative of an attitude that is still very much around, and very much complicates our task in researching the institution.

A second problem that I think is very much what Mike said, which is just that it is very difficult to study the community college because it is very widespread and very varied. We have a great tendency to treat it as a unitary institution when it is anything but. So if we do study it, we tend to study it in a way that doesn't honor the complexity of the institution.

A third problem is we tend to, when we study the community college, to not acknowledge the many ways in which as an organization, or community colleges as organizations, can differ markedly from four-year schools in curriculum and mission, and governance and finance and staffing problems. To return, just for a minute, to the issue of finance, the fact that a lot of community colleges have, at least partially, a local tax base gives them a very kind of relationship to government than, let's say four-year schools have and that leads to a very different kind of political and economic context for them.

The fourth difficulty, and I think it flows from a reaction to the dismissal of the community college. A sense that the community college may be misunderstood—that is, when studied, it's through four-year lenses. There's a difficulty that I think a lot of community college people, there's a certain defensiveness when they encounter research, a defensiveness of that's critical. A tendency to feel, too quickly I think, that they're being patronized, so that they want to dismiss findings that they feel are critical. So that when research that addresses a community college does touch on critical topics—and I'm thinking of my own research included—it has been frustrating to feel that it has been simply dismissed and not listened to and grappled with. Not necessarily agreed with, but grappled with, rather than simply set aside [as if to say] "I don't want to hear this". But in good part, that stems from a feeling that too often the community college has been misunderstood and dismissed and the fear that "Hear we go again". But how we can overcome that feeling and allow people to grapple with the research in its full complexity, I think that's an important task for all of us.

**-DB:** Let me just say that I think a number of my colleagues' statements and the rest of this will be shaped by the fact that I am in a Research I, land-grant institution and I'm sure we will be, very much, drawing upon our experiences. But when I think about the questions that Barbara has asked us to think about, my own experience shapes those. And I would like to start with sort of a catch-22 and it gets at something Kevin just mentioned and that is the broader higher education community looks at community college research as filling a niche. So they often just see us as fairly, narrowly focused. And I think, again, that the research in this area sometimes is seen as a necessary evil. That higher education needs to do it, but people who do mainstream, higher education don't want to be the people who are doing it. So it's important that someone does it and that tends to be us, I think.

The other part of the catch-22 though is that for someone like me in a land-grant institution, there's a lot of expectations for service and the constituents we work with within the College of Education, within the university, and the broader community within the state, expect us as community college specialists to be generalists. There aren't very many of us, so we're supposed to know everything about the community college. So one important constituency sees us as very narrow and another important constituency says you should know everything, and I feel like I often get caught in the middle of that. The service expectations are great. And Barbara you've already mentioned that within your own institution, when there are issues around community college we're often asked to be at the table, whether it's in Champaign, or Springfield, or Chicago. So that role is an important one to be played. But it puts us in the middle with a lot of potentially high expectations for service.

A second roadblock is one that Mike has mentioned and that is that many community college leaders and faculty don't care much about research. They haven't had particularly good experiences themselves. They look at the research on community college and they often mistrust it. And sometimes who can blame them given the way the community college is misunderstood, or is portrayed in the research. More broadly, it's not very flattering, and at best sometimes misses the mark. So I think it's



understandable that community college administrators, policy makers, and faculty members, sometimes don't trust the research that we do. That does extend into the fact that our graduate students are often part time, they work in the community college, they aren't on campus to do research—to apprentice, to learn to do research, to work on grants and become more heavily involved in the research enterprise. And that has a very direct impact on those of who are doing research and trying to build research programs because we really want those folks to be involved. Added to that, many of those of us who do research are also only part-time researchers in the community college, so there's a lot of part-time people in this enterprise.

I want to also mention another roadblock, because of my own particular orientation, that hasn't been mentioned. And that is we talk about, within the broader higher education research agenda, that the community college fulfills a niche there, that is also true in the broader true within the broader field of vocational technical education, where again, the community college is sort of a little niche. It's a specialized area in that field and a field that's very dominated by federal legislation and how we think about the enterprise, and outcomes assessment accountability. It's primarily dominated by secondary education, so that whole enterprise, and that realm of public policy is much more directed toward secondary education, and their community colleges are an afterthought. We struggle with trying to define what that really means in the community college and how to assess it. Some examples of that are that public policy still contains language around dropout, graduation, academic achievement, and community colleges say, "What does that mean to me"? I have to somehow assess these programs and they really are caught in the middle where it seems no one really understands what the enterprise is about. I don't know if I'm being very clear, but it's a struggle in that either way we look at it, the community colleges aren't very well addressed.

Finally, there is a serious lack of resources, obviously, from many perspectives. I think we are beginning to see now some attention paid to community colleges; the beginning of some more opportunities for resources. But this is the field that has really had very, very minimal resources directed toward research and I think that explains a lot of why we can't answer very many questions.

- [SC]: I'm going to change what I was going to say to play off of this and also not to repeat what others have said. If you study community colleges, it is not uncommon that you might be the only person on the campus with a research specialization in that. So, you also have to justify your existence to people if you're an assistant professor at tenure time, to people in Ed Psych, or other fields that know little about the journals, may or may not have preconceived notions about them—some of the same arguments that we've heard down the line. That is another challenge, internally. You can't get around the resource issue. When the federal government was putting serious money into the leadership development in the late '60s and early '70s, an NDEA fellowship was \$7,600 in cash plus tuition, plus fees, plus textbooks. That's \$28,000 now. Well, there was a lot of status to this field when you could have access to that kind of grant money and full-time students to help with research, and that's been out the door for a long time.

I've visited 300 different community colleges in 33 states over my career. I'm completing, right now, a national survey of community college chief executive officers and chief academic officers for the book I'm doing on rural community colleges, and I'll use this an example of the challenges we have.

I did a survey—I made 17 site visits in 15 states and did a survey in 1999. I asked the chief executive officers to assess factors that impacted the institution externally and a similar survey with a little twist for the chief academic officers of the institution internally, in terms of how they provide access and how they provide economic development. I got a 50% response rate of the 731 community colleges—and this gets into because we have no agreed upon classification scheme, surveys tend to be state, regional, or national, masking the differences that exist within the states.

Now that survey was done in '99 and we had good economic times. I'm redoing it now because I'm interested to see how urban, rural, and suburban differ, and I'm interested to see if the recession differs because the rural areas, for the book I'm working on, are typically last out of the recession and first back in, in some of the high poverty areas of the United States. My goal is to—I've taken the AACC's list, which they sell right on the ad, you can get the list of all the presidents. I now have a list of all the chief academic officers. Beyond that, I have the community colleges that aren't members of the AACC, okay—you have to have that. You also have to take a look at the difference between your urban and suburban versus multi-campus districts. The federal government can't tell you community colleges there are in this country because they use IPED's codes and you have nine different Maricopa Colleges, but one Miami-Dade. So, our plan is to put this on the website for the Priest Center so that any of you that wanted to pull it, and grab it down would be able to do stratified samples by community college type because what I see is that we don't know nearly as much as we should know about a whole host of issues from programs that work, and student advisement, and college work-study, to a whole host of other things that we should know about community colleges.

**-BT:** I can say ditto to practically everything my colleagues said, and let me give you one other thought here. You've heard about the great variations among community colleges, they vary also, very much, among the states. So if you decide to study them at the state level, there's a lot of inconsistency about what kinds of data are collected at the state level. States really vary in their interest in collecting data on the community college. Some states do a great job—Illinois, Florida. Some other states—they don't do research on higher education institutions in general, so they certainly wouldn't focus on the community college.

Even if you can get access to state data sets, and of course that's a political thing right there—you have to know someone in a state agency who will give you access. The variables that they look at vary, and they also limit what can be studied. For example, I like to look at transfer and I recently did a study about the transfer of people who got associate degrees in the Missouri public community colleges back in '95-'96 and then we tracked them through the year 2000 to see which one's transferred and then if they transferred, how well they succeeded. I was interested in looking at the AA—you know,

the traditional transfer students—versus those who have the applied degrees. But we could only look at the transfer of these students to the public two-year colleges within the state because that's the only data that were collected. So it gets difficult—you can't track transfer outside of public institutions and outside of the one's within a particular state. Well, I presented the paper, which had some very interesting findings—those applied degree recipients, the terminal students that Deb Bragg spoke about—enough of them transferred that it increased the transfer rate for the state by about 4%, so it's important to count those students. But also they did better academically, in terms of GPA, than did the people with the true transfer degrees. They didn't complete quite the same baccalaureate attainment rate, but there wasn't that much difference.

So I presented this at a national conference where there were a lot of people from community colleges, who did research on community colleges, so they truly understood what I was talking about, and they were very interested. And they all went “Oh this great”. And I said, “Well how does this compare to your state?”

“Well...I don't know?”

Because their states aren't doing this, I have no idea—nor do they—if the transfer rates we found are abnormally high, low, typical. All I know is that they are for this state, for this one cohort—and again problems with using state data the colleague that I did this with was the Assistant Commissioner for the Coordinating Board for Higher Education in Missouri has now changed positions. It was going to be eliminated because of budget problems, so I can no longer access the database there to follow up [with] the next cohort, etc.. So there are problems when you try to use existing data.

That's in terms of actually conducting the research, but there's one other little wrinkle here—even if you do this research, then you have to ask if it can get published. Is there an audience for it? Those of you who know about outlets for researching community colleges know that there's three journals that publish, that are committed to publishing research on the community college. They're very small. *The Community College Review* is the biggest and it has a subscription rate of 1,100 people. Another one of those journals has 480, another one has 840—those are small journals. The other journals, the three general higher education journals—Deb Bragg and I, and another colleague have done a study on this recently—each of those journals, *Research in Higher Education*, *Journal of Higher Education*, and *Review of Higher Education*, from 1990 through the year 2000, less than 3% of the articles published in those journals focused on the community college as measured by [if] the words “community college”, or “junior college”, or “two-year college” was in the title of those articles. That's very, very small. So even if you can do the research [the issue of] can you get it published becomes an issue.

Okay, how about—you've heard our thoughts on this. Do you have some thoughts or questions, [or] comments? If so, please come forward and give us your name and your institution and your thoughts. Anybody willing?

- I'm Sherry Francis [SF], working part-time at Glendale Community College in southern California and part-time at UCLA and I got my degree at UCLA. [I wrote my dissertation] on collaboration between UCLA and several K-12 school districts. So as I'm sitting here listening to the dilemma [regarding] the secondary—not even secondary, tertiary—status community colleges seem to have. And I'm learning quite a lot because when I got to California, I had only been familiar with four-year, private institutions. Going to UCLA was my first time working at a public institution of four years. And then learning about California's Master Plan that mandated that the 12.5% percent [of high school graduates] are eligible to go to the UC's, the top third of high school [graduates] are eligible to go to the Cal State system and everybody else then had automatic access to the community colleges there.

Now I thought initially that sounded, well it is kind of hierarchical because that puts the UC's as the prestige institutions. However, it seems like—from what I'm hearing today and what I heard yesterday at another community college session—that maybe community colleges in California might have a better sense of self because of that. Because you guys work with community colleges, or on them, or in them I was wondering about that. And also, to make a recommendation particularly for Mike—sort of looking at what the partnerships are that are going on between the university and K-12 because if k-12 seems to be the guide for community colleges, whether rightly or wrongly, looking at what they're calling action research now where they're encouraging teachers to go into their schools and do research and not apologize for it. It's called pragmatic research and there's a growing body of literature throughout the conference just this year about how action research is pragmatic and it uses the people within the system to study [it] and to advocate for change—looking at what can be done, what needs to be done, and anticipating the future.

**So my question is how are the California community colleges—are they different that what seems to be the nationwide trend,** from what I've heard yesterday and today. And then just to make that recommendation about maybe looking at the K-12/university partnership, action research with university and community college professors.

**-BT:** Thank you. Linda, do you possibly want to comment on the California community colleges? This is Linda Hagidoor at the University of Southern California.

**-LH:** I've worked with several different districts, Illinois being one of the main ones, and worked with Chicago city colleges. And I can use Illinois as a comparison. In Illinois, we had the same system, only its not documented the same way. You have the University of Illinois system, which is at the top. You have the Northern Illinois, Southern Illinois, Western Illinois, Eastern Illinois, in the middle. And then you have the community colleges at the bottom.

California has documented their program much better. The truth is, I think it's very, very similar to what you're going to find in other states like Illinois and Texas, and New York, Florida—the states that have very developed community college systems. California's system has some campuses that are very well developed, that have high transfer rates and

that function very much—more similar to four-year colleges where you're on campus where you'll see students who act the same and talk the same as they do at four-year colleges. Then you go into the urban areas and you look at those institutions and they look very different. Well, I can give you the same example in Illinois. I could spot different campuses and tell you that they look very, very similar. So I don't think that California is really unique. California's big. We have a lot of colleges, we have 108 of them and in Los Angeles we have nine alone. But I don't think they're unique.

-MQ: I think on the idea of the action research, it struck me that as I was preparing for this that a lot of our faculty are really into research in the classroom. They'll try things—they'll use control groups, they'll do really nice little studies of "What if I did this differently?" but they don't write it up for publication, they typically share it at statewide discipline meetings and tell people about it, so it's kind of a grassroots research and it probably doesn't get shared with any of the administration at the college other than the person who does that person's evaluation. So if it turns out real good they might get to do a presentation for our board or something. I think it [action research] does go on but it's not the kind of thing that gets published, or [the kind of thing] that you could access real easily if you're trying to do scholarly research.

-SF: And why don't they try to get it published?

-MQ: There's no reward system for it. That was one of my points that I didn't get to, but there's not a great deal of reward built into the community college system for publishing research, even at my level where your job is doing the research. Publishing is considered an e-mail with an attachment to the college community and maybe giving a copy to the system office in our case, but that's not built in. If you want to be rewarded for publishing, you have to negotiate that that is an important thing to do and it's not often seen as being that. It's [seen as something that is] taking away from time you could be spending on committees and stuff. So you can do it, but you have to take it home with you or something.

-SC: The only thing I would add though is that there was a very interesting study done a couple of years ago by an Iowa State dissertation student and he was taking some of George Bond's work on pathways to presidents and what were respected in presidents. The presidents who wrote for publication were the most respected. I think that's because they are internalizing their institution and trends as they affect their institution, and perhaps you could call it a trade or industry, to a broad audience. So that's the flip side of that.

-LH: One roadblock for those of us that are involved with Research I institutions is that the community college journals that will publish our research are not considered with the same—do not have the same prestige as *The Journal of Higher Education*, or *Research in Higher Education*, or *Review of Higher Education*. So although we may do quality research on the community college and it may be published in these journals that are refereed, we still don't get the same recognition. And when it comes time for tenure and



promotion, your research is counted but it is not given the same amount of credit as if it were published in the top tiered journals. That's another roadblock.

**-BT:** And I know this is going to sound kind of whiny and thumb sucking, but those of us who do the bulk of our research on the community college really do feel somewhat stigmatized by other researchers. They usually don't come to sessions on the community college. I'm happy to see that there are a few people here today who are an exception to that. I remember in the mid-'80's, when I was first starting out, and someone who was extremely prestigious was my department chair at the time and I was going to do a study on something and needed some financial support from the department for it—I was doing a survey so I needed stamps and envelopes and all that. He agreed to fund it, but he said to me "We really don't do research on that sort of thing here". So he let me do it, but he was giving me the message that I really should be researching something else. And I think that attitude still prevails, so in some ways we're being very brave to continue to do research on the community college because it's not well regarded, the higher up you go in an institution or, in a sense, within your profession. We're the few, the proud, the brave.

- I'm about to defend a dissertation proposal in the department of Sociology and I'm having to justify [as to] who cares about the community college. And I can point, luckily, to Kevin's work and maybe one other thing or two. But it's difficult. My question is [about] the money issue and obviously, I'm very, very concerned about this because—something as minor as funding a dissertation, let alone funding something major. So my question is, who has been supportive and do you know of things—I know, for example, [that] the MacArthur network has set researching community colleges on their agenda. Aside from that, I'm not aware of very much and I'm hoping maybe you can answer that.

**-KD:** First I'll give you one of my horror stories. I had a research paradigm that I was trying to promote and I sent a letter to a very prominent foundation and got back from one of the reviewers there that they wanted to have a more formal presentation made. So I prepared a larger proposal and sent it to this person and didn't hear from her for what I considered a fairly long amount of time. So I called and asked her what was going on and she said, "Oh, we've run into some changes in leadership. Let me get back to you". So I said okay, and I got a call from her a couple of weeks later and she said, "Would you send me a letter formally dismissing your first letter? I want you to un-apply." And I said, "I don't quite understand". She said, "I don't want to have to turn you down—I like the proposal. I want to un-apply now, so that when we get this sorted out, you can apply later."

I found out later that this was the first time they had ever gotten something from a community college to the boardroom and she didn't realize that that just didn't happen there. So they had to go back on it. But there are places that are being much better to community colleges—the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education has very much embraced community colleges.

**End of Tape 1, Side 1**



## **Tape 1, Side 2**

**-BT:** I just wanted to say one thing about the FIPSE projects. If you've applied for any of them at all, you have to cost share incredibly and you get very little indirect rates. At my institution—don't bother because the indirect rate is so low. You might want to talk about the Sloan funding that you have.

**- SC:** I'm at the Community College Research Center at Teacher's College, Columbia. We've gone through two rounds of funding from the Sloan Foundation and have every prospect of going successfully through another round. They have also expressed great interest in proposals on the community college. Their focus, historically, has been on workforce development but they are clearly interpreting that very widely and have also, very lively interest in distance education. So they're a funding source that you should seriously consider. A couple of others, to maybe just steal a line from Barbara's, we do know that the Lumina Foundation has expressed an interest, as has—you mentioned Hewlett.

To go back to Sarah's question, the comment. I think that we that what we're getting is a change in attitude. Certainly, the fact that a lot of different conferences are occurring on the community college—the Russell Sage Foundation had one, the Social Science Research Council, the Spencer Foundation held one—there are a whole variety of conferences occurring. The community college has been identified as an area of interest, so that to some degree, we're finally coming out at the other end with considerably more interest in the community college. Albeit perhaps a bit narrow in a sense that the focus is, for example very much driven by an interest in labor market connections for the community college, so there's a concern of how wide this interest is, or what ambit of topics they'll accept. But nonetheless, I think there's considerable interest.

**-[?]:** The only thing I will add though is it's still indeterminant if the Department of Education is going to fill the Community Colleges Liaison position and how. We also do not have very large pots of money that students at the graduate student level, trying to do a dissertation that might cost \$1,500 or \$2,000 can go to, to access for the purpose of doing dissertation research. We really haven't had that sense Ford and Kellogg got out a long time ago. I think that this is an issue that we all need to be really worried about. The Association of Community College Trustees has funded a couple of my own students' dissertations, in which you would, in return, write a paper for them. That's one other possible source for you.

**-[DB]:** Let me add another source for graduate students. AACC also has an internship program and they are encouraging students to come to Washington and work in their office, and they are making available their data sets. We had a conversation with Marilyn Amey and who indicated that she had a student—she's at Michigan State—who had a very good experience with that. Something else that hasn't come up is that, in terms of sources everybody's mentioning foundations but I feel fortunate that in the state of Illinois for the past 12 years we have had funded an office of community college research and leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with state funds and we

primarily look at policy issues that affect the community colleges. So there are some other ways, but they're not large pots of money, but it has been a fairly stable source of funding that's provided resources for graduate students at our institution.

- Much of what I'm going to say is going to add to this last line of inquiry. I'm Chris Mazzio, I'm at Brewer College in New York City. What I actually want to speak to [is that] I noticed when I came here, since I've only recently started thinking about doing work on community colleges over the last two years, [it is] striking how colleges within the larger academic enterprise—research and postsecondary education—are clearly lower status because the worlds that I've been in recently, both as a researcher but particularly—I worked on one of the Ford Foundation studies that's been done on workforce development that's been done with a bunch of colleagues and have been in a lot of foundation kinds of meetings, and I've been doing some work with the National Governors Association, so I've talked with some policy makers. [I've noticed] how central both the community college, and even the broader issue of access for some low income folks, is on people's minds, and seeing colleges as a seriously underutilized resource in how disconnected that often is from the way we talk about it and the level of profile even within these settings.

And I'm not just talking about AERA—at AERA everything, I suppose, is sort of low profile because AERA is so big. And I think that's important, and I think we need to—there's an emerging policy agenda out there. I think Kevin's right [in that] it can be often narrow, but it offers an opportunity for researchers to do policy research broadly defined, to create a new way of thinking about this issue and our new set of priorities. And I think it's not far off to say that the kinds of research we see here at AERA around school reform, generally K-12, it's not far off to see that happening around community colleges. I think the challenge is taking some of the research issues that interest policy makers, that interest foundations, and broadening them to kinds of concerns we have, more generally, as scholars. That's the challenge. And if I can, as someone who spans boundaries—it's important to be able to do both. It's important particularly, to be able to answer the kinds of questions policy makers want answered. One of them is making distinctions about colleges in terms of what works, what doesn't, and finding defensible measures of performance that again are not reductive, but are actually something people can look at and say “Wow, that's something we know, that's something we don't know”. I think that's right now lacking and I think people perceive that it's lacking.

-[BT]: Thank you. We're going to go on now so that we can get both the gaps and the possibilities in. If you will talk briefly about what you see as some gaps in the research on community colleges. And you don't have to cover—everybody doesn't have to cover everything so that we all can say something.

-[MQ]: The first gap I see is that there aren't many standardized, widely accepted paradigms for studying the outcomes in community colleges. And a lot of that is because we don't have those very clearly defined. Our anticipated outcomes are not easy to get a handle on. Barbara studies graduates, but at our institution that's 600 to 700 students out of an annual enrollment of 10,000 students, so defining your success in terms of what

graduates do opens you to a lot of criticism, as community colleges are well aware. Even within the occupational technical area, are we preparing people to get a job? 85% of our students have a job when they come, so that's not something we can look at. [Can they] get a better job? Is it a return on investment kind of thing? We don't know—everybody picks what looks the best for their college because we're always defending ourselves.

College transfer is the same kind of thing—are students expected to perform at the same level as native students when they transfer, or are they supposed to just get by and get a degree? Or is it enough that they get accepted at the four-year college when they wouldn't have when they started maybe. That's one thing.

The other major thing that I see is we have very, very poor documentation on the input side. If you go to a major research university, they can tell you not only what their students did, but what their [students'] parents did, probably. At community colleges, we've been open door and the early tradition was that it would be demeaning to even collect that kind of information—that it wasn't important and that we shouldn't do it. Now we don't have good information on what students bring to the community college in terms of—we say, “We want high school transcripts”, but we'll enroll you without them. We don't look at test scores very much; we don't keep good records on that. A lot of our students don't take tests. We do some assessment when students come in for placement purposes. That's pretty much it in terms of what they're doing. We talk about [the fact that] they have lots of things outside but we don't what those are. How many are single mothers? How many are working parents? We know we have a lot, but we don't know who they are or what kind of successes they have. So I think those are the two big things—we don't know what we're trying to accomplish and we don't know who we're trying to accomplish it with. Those are two pretty big gaps.

-[KD]: I can see gaps in a wide variety of areas—I want to touch on four, but let me mention the full list. Educational attainment and transfer—there's a lot I think we need to learn. The economic development role of the community college; the community college role in general education; performance accountability. I'll talk about those four, and then another four—remedial education and I'm hoping that Kerry Churn, who's here, can talk about what CCRC has been doing and what might be done; distance education, which we're also looking at; the organizations and missions of the community college—how those evolved, how those are changing—I'm hoping that Vanessa Smith Morris will speak to that; and the connections between K-12 and community colleges—that I absolutely defer to Deborah Bragg who can speak on that far better than I could.

Let me go back to the others—educational attainment and transfer. As you know, I've done a lot of research in this area and I'm still struck by what still remains for us to know. We don't understand how community college effects vary by student background. We've tended to look at the general effect; we haven't really looked a lot at how those vary by the characteristics of students. For example their social background, their academic preparation. We haven't looked at how those effects vary by the characteristics of the community college. For example are much more highly vocational community colleges going to have going to have very different transfer rates than less vocational

one's? Rural versus urban—any different characteristics. And still looking at the individual student level, we're beginning to get much better data, thanks for example to the efforts that Linda Hagidoor has been leading, or the work that Barbara has been doing, or Frankie Lannan have done. But that will begin to answer what I'm thinking are major areas where we need research. There is evidence that community colleges, all other things being equal, have considerably higher dropout rates. Is that true? We need to make sure that is true. The next question is why. I and others have laid out a series of explanations based on the available data. I think a lot more needs to be done.

The continuation rates for community college students seem to be considerably lower than those for four-year college students going from sophomore to junior year. We need to fully document that with really good data sets and then, again, explain them. I've provided some elements of an explanation—I think a lot more needs to be done. There is also the argument as to post-transfer attrition. I'm seeing emerge what I regard is a finding that I don't think has been demonstrated and that's the argument that community college transfers have no lower of an attrition rate than four-year natives. I don't think that's true. I think that finding comes from comparing community college transfers to four-year natives not controlling for the amount of credits that they have attained. If you were to compare community college transfers to four-year natives who've reached the junior year, I think the community college transfers have a higher attrition rate. However, that has not been demonstrated in fully laid out quantitative analysis and I think that's an area that really begs further analysis.

The second area that I think we need a lot more research in, is the area of what I've called the new economic development role of the community college. I completed a study at the Community College Research Center a couple of years ago on this, and this is an area Deborah Bragg has done a lot of work. I think we have a fairly good sense of how contract training works though a lot more could be said. But there are two other areas that have barely been touched. The community college plays a major role in small business development—we don't know that much about how that occurs, who's brought in, how effective the programs are. And one area I find very interesting is local economic planning. The community college, particularly in rural areas—and I think that Steve has been very good to bring us back to thinking about rural areas—is often the sole institution that can effectively bring together a variety of actors to talk about planning for that rural area. And the community college brings something that I think is very important—like the local chamber of commerce, it's much more likely to bring a full range of CBO's, let's say representing minority groups, and bringing unions there. So I think it has the capacity—but this is a supposition—to in effect be an agency of local economic development planning that can be considerably more democratic than the other possible vehicles, but I don't think this role has been adequately analyzed. Certainly, I've been looking at it; I think far more needs to be done.

A third area that I think very little has been done is in the role of the general education, multicultural education role of the community college. We do know that community colleges do a lot, but my sense is that the coverage is wide, but not deep. We need [a] far better understanding to what degree are community college students receiving general

education and multicultural education. Especially in areas like occupational education. And what do we know about the effects of the available curriculum and what more can be learned about available models for the successful incorporation of general education, multicultural education into, for example, contract training or occupational education. So we need to know much more about its prevalence and its impact on students because I think one of the things the community colleges have the promise of is as the high schools have become more and more segregated by class and race, perhaps the key institution for bringing people together of widely divergent backgrounds is the community college. It would be very good to get a sense [as] to what degree are they doing it, with what impact. And I think it may emerge as a key institution in that area.

The last area is performance accountability. I'm leading a project at the Community College Research Center, as part of what we're calling the national field study and Vanessa's been our operational director for it. What we've been looking at is the development and spread of performance accountability reporting, performance funding. Looking at its intended impacts—to what degree are the things that the legislators are seeking, or federal government officials are seeking, to what degree are they met? Increased graduation, remediation, job placement rates. But what are the unintended impacts? Are community colleges, for example, in order to boost the retention rates, tempted to and actually have begun quietly restricting the open door by quietly putting less emphasis on outreach to students, perhaps from less advantaged backgrounds that they think are less likely to graduate. And by that redirection might they be trying to boost the numbers? It's a supposition, it's one that we're investigating now, but a lot more, I think, could be done on that.

What are the problems that institutions have with performance accountability? For example designing systems to gather the data, use the data, to deal with the instability of accountability systems that states impose. And finally, what might we do about policy in this area? One of the key problems that community colleges run into with a lot of performance accountability systems—a lot of the measures are designed with four-year institutions in mind. What might we do to retool those systems to better acknowledge the particularities of the institution? The notion of retention takes on a very different meaning within the community college context.

**End of Tape 1, Side 2.**



## Tape 2, Side 1

- [KD]: Students may come and go having taken two credits, or they're coming in to take contract training paid for by their employers. Can we meaningfully think of general education? Can we measure community colleges on this? What might be done to build better accountability systems using more sophisticated measures that adequately track what the institution can and should be doing?

- [DB]: When I look over my list, I'll be shorter Barbara because I think I must have been so depressed when I got through roadblocks that I didn't come up with all that many gaps. I would agree, I think, with that Kevin has said—that we are a field that is a mile wide and an inch deep. So you can find a little of something on just about everything, but the quality of it may leave you feeling a little bit depressed.

I'm only going to identify one substantive area that I think is surprising, that we seem to have a persistent gap in, and then make a couple of comments about how we do research. First, let me just say that I think there is an amazing gap in research in teaching and learning in the community college environment, particularly in an institution that claims to be at the pinnacle of high quality teaching. There isn't a whole lot of evidence that backs this up when you really start investigating it. I think that was what at the heart of Norton Grubb's book *Honored But Invisible*, if you've looked at that. But there's really not very much evidence that the instructional practices and strategies are effective, that we really understand the diverse learners who are there, that we're constructing and delivering curriculum that's meeting needs, and I could go on and on.

Now maybe we can attribute this to the fact that community colleges are part of the larger higher education enterprise and we don't look at teaching and learning very much either, so that might explain it. But, I think that at time whenever we—I think we recognize the importance of the diversity of the institution and then we know that the institutions need to become more diverse in terms of our faculty/administrators to meet student needs. This is a crucial area for more study. And especially the research that is showing diverse learning environments can produce very rich outcomes, we need to understand that much more in the community college environment.

Let me just mention then a couple of gaps in terms of how we do research. I agree with Mike that we have a lack of rigorous research on assessment and understanding the outcomes of the enterprise, and the challenge related to that for all of us—and I'm sure we've all struggled with it as you have—and that is what stance do we take as a researcher in this field? There's a camp of critics and there's a camp of advocates. And probably a lot of us here have tried to walk the tightrope between those two groups. That is very challenging for us. Every single study that I undertake, and I'm sure many people in this room, I spend a lot of time thinking about that and how I'll write about that, how I'll speak about that. I don't know if that's true for other fields, but it's a vitally important thing that we as researchers of community colleges have to think about.



The other area, just briefly, in terms of how we do research has to do with scope and scale. We are really challenged in this field because a lot of the information is at the institutional level. The ERIC databases are filled with institutional studies. But we don't know very much about state level policy issues and we know even less about national, something on a national scope. And this played out in the analysis that Barb and I did looking at journal articles that have been published in the field, in the community college literature and in the traditional higher ed journals. There are some really interesting findings there, but we can't generalize very much of what we know at the state level or at the national level. So, that's a real challenge.

- [SC]: I want to say this—I'm excited by the new scholarship that's emerging and the new scholars that are emerging in community colleges. I've attended the Council for the Study of Community Colleges meetings for some 15, 16 years. I would guess we have a large number of people of color who were not there at the start of that; a fair number of graduate students—there's a strong interest—I see that. It's now time for new frames and new frameworks. We lack, when you think about how we do research, we need quantitative and qualitative, and historical, and we need longitudinal studies.

I'll give you just one example on the longitudinal. The AACC published James Laughtenbarger's finance studies of state finance every year for three years for about seven iterations of that and decided not to do it after 1990. Not one has been done since. IPEDS is not that useful for looking at that piece of data. We need to reform IPEDS and we're going to need some outside leadership to help with that, to have the status to do that. And it's very important that the people who are involved in that this time actually have been involved with community college research. A lot of times they don't even bring those people to the table, and right now IPEDS cannot give you a good measure of English as a second language, cannot give you a good measure of developmental education.

The financial aid module is not as good as it could be. It's an indictment, I'm afraid on our national associations to some degree that we're going to have another higher ed reauthorization and we don't have the million dollar gold plate study of the impact of the Pell Grant in providing access to opportunity. I'm almost embarrassed about that. The Priest Center's been working with the Association of American Community College Students to develop a Pell Grant survey that they can administer. But we know, and we've known this for a long time, that childcare and transportation are two of the top barriers to access for poor people who attend community colleges. That's not a new finding, and yet we can't figure out how to change the Pell standards to make those allowable activities.

The student services function. T.R. O'Connell, famous study, 1965, called that the black hole in effect, of community college practitioners. That received some attention for about 10 or 15 years. It seems to me that we need to look at that one again. We have to be doing a better job of counseling our students, and that's a lot more than just slapping an ACT assessment exam on them, and that's something the rest of higher ed doesn't do particularly well. I think community colleges have to do better.

We need to do better historical research on community colleges. How did these institutions get to be the way they are? Why did one state's system take—why did one state take the route it took? What I see happening now in Texas, we're supposed to bring a half-million new students in the next 15 years. Anticipate 370,000 of them are going to go to community colleges. Many of them will go in south Texas, [they will] be Hispanic, recent immigrants, large numbers of them. We're trying to drive state policy for a new century with 1947 enabling law. There is a lot of renewed attention out in the field. I share your comment completely that the governors and those people are more into this than some of our colleagues may be in a meeting like this, but there's a lot interest on the part of policy makers on this enabling law issue that was not there before, so I see lots of opportunity and it excites me to see the interest level out there.

- [BT]: In the study that Deb Bragg and I did, and we've referenced it a couple of times, in terms of the topics that were covered in the six journals over that eleven year period about 25% were on students, but when you're talking students, you're talking transfer students. Rarely are adult students looked at, occupational/technical students looked at. Governance and administration was also about 20% of the studies and then it just sort of fell apart after that.

Almost nothing is done, including in the community college journals, on budgeting and finance, developmental education as Kevin mentioned, continuing education and community services. Kent Filipe at one of these conferences that we all go to said recently there's a desperate interest in AACC for research on continuing education and continuing education students. Nobody's looking at them but they're a significant percentage of the enrollment at community colleges. There's almost no cross-cultural research on the community college. We have some knowledge of Canadian colleges because of John Levin's work but there are two-year colleges in many countries but we don't know about them. So, actually—and that's what we're talking about today. We are talking about research on the American community college and we were so ethnocentric we didn't even acknowledge that.

Very few studies utilize national databases and the quantitative research tends to be descriptive with limited use of newer, more powerful methods of statistical analysis such as structural equation modeling and hierarchical linear modeling. The research is somewhat thin. But that's why we're here today, to point out these gaps and things we can do better.

Comments from you all, questions, comments.

- Hi, Alex McCormack from the Carnegie Foundation. Just two quick comments to a couple of things I've heard. I apologize too because I missed the very beginning of the session, but I did hear this part all the way through. On the question of understanding—taking a look at outcomes relative to community college characteristics—one of the things I'm working on is the Carnegie classification, and revision of the classification. This is a pretty high priority for, to try to unpack the community college part of the classification, which just sits as a big lump. And we all know it's a very diverse group of

institutions. I'm certainly interested in hearing from the research community some ideas as to how we might do that. And I'm editing something for New Directions on the topic as well. So I hope you all get a chance to look at it and let us know what you think.

On the issue of outcomes and also understanding teaching and learning a little bit, I think one interesting and promising development is the spin-off of NSSE work, the National Survey of Student Engagement, that's the Community College Survey of Engagement which is an attempt to get some data—not directly on teaching and learning—of student activities that are known to be correlated with learning outcomes, positive learning outcomes. I think those are both really promising developments. And I hope you all will take a look at them when they are available, or in the case of the classification will help me out with it.

- SC: The one thing I would want to [add is] there's a lot of interest out in the field right now about leadership in community colleges. That's [due] in part [to the fact] that we have fewer African Americans that receive doctorates across all fields of education in '96 than we had in '77. The Hispanic numbers did not rise anywhere near the growth of the Hispanic population. This has been a big issue for the institutions and the AACC. My hope is that it may become an issue for the foundation and for the feds. That said, my hope is that we might be able to parlay our desire, in terms of improving the quality on a broad base of the research that's out there by linking to that in an appropriate manner.

- I am Vera Hill Layton at the University of Toronto. I'm trying not to be really depressed here. I'm wondering if we should all meet at the bar later. But, in just listening to these last comments, just having moved to another country, and trying to really learn the Canadian system, especially community colleges and higher education in general, several things have been striking me throughout the months that I have been there, since I arrived in September. One of them is the paucity of research on Canadian community colleges and the fact that they keep—"they", I guess I am now part of the "they"—looking at American research and this repetitive line that I keep hearing from the faculty and students is that "Wow, American researchers have really done so much". So I think the other side of it is that while we may be saying, "Look at what we haven't addressed", certainly taking that comparative, or international, perspective, we set the standard here in the U.S.

On the other hand, the comment about the historical—as one thing to resonate to along those lines—is [that] among this paucity of research, there are only a couple of people, and I can name the three, that do research on community colleges and one of them now lives in the U.S. and that's John Levin. John Levin's senior advisor and mentor is John Dennison. He and a colleague, Paul Gallagher, have done an historical overview of the Canadian community colleges. The thing is—I looked and thought "Where's ours?" Because they look across the ten provinces—that itself tells us something. They've only got ten provinces and we've got 50 states. They started in 1960 to 1965, and they can document very easily, whereas we've been around for 100 years. But did set my mind thinking, "How do we go about creating some kind of counter?" I don't think we can go about it by looking at 50 states in some book, as they did the ten provinces. But I do

think we really do need to have a better understanding of our own history because there are always different stories out there about the Great Man Theory, and all sorts of things. I'm starting to ramble now, but I did want to point those things out.

- Hi, Jan Sanderford from Florida International University where we do a lot of things with Miami-Dade Community College. We say they're the biggest. One of the things that I'm concerned about, that didn't come up here, is the faculty and studies about the faculty. Who they are? We are finding that Miami-Dade Community College started in about 1960, the faculty have reached their 30 year—they're retiring. Who's going to replace these people? Right now, [the one's who] are replacing these people are part-timers. And the full-timers who are still there are getting burned out and they're trying to carry the load and they can't do the load. I think we need something, in terms of the depth, as far as faculty are concerned.

- **MQ:** I am a past Miami-Dade alum. I will tell you, I think that is a big issue. I think it's tied to the leadership issue. I think that it's directly tied and that it has to be brought into that. The AACC published two editions by Ben Haughton and Paulison of the 50 states' histories from the perspective of the state offices. Barry Lumston's journal did have a series—I did one of the monographs for that—on brief state histories. There's a great need for a lot more of that. In part, just to have something to hand to your graduate students about the history of the state you might be teaching in, if for no other reason.

- **BT:** Let me go on to make sure that we get in the pathways and possibilities. What can we forward to in the future? Obviously we need to address these gaps, but what are some possible ways to improve the research, to stretch the research?

-**MQ:** I think I came up with a couple more since we've been here. One thing I see as very important is having more forums like the one I happen to be president of now, the Southeastern Association for Community College Research. We are unique in that we have people who do research in the community colleges talking with people who do research on the community colleges. The problem areas—we get together once a year to talk about the problem areas and then we go back and deal with the problems. We need a way of using groups like this and developing groups like this to come up with some strategies for combining what people in the academic research area do, with those like me, down in the trenches.

Some of the things I think we could do is develop an agenda, maybe with AACC or somebody like that, some areas to look at. Let graduate students and university faculty do meta-analyses on the research paradigms we use and if people at my level are all using the same outcome measures and the same sampling techniques, we can do what we need to do locally and turn it over to somebody at a national level to do the high-powered statistics that I'm not going to go back and learn again. I stick with my Chi-Squares—I'm very comfortable with those. I wouldn't mind somebody else taking my data and doing that for me right now. So I think that's a way we could partner better. We had a lot of good experience partnering a particular college or university doing research that

makes sense for us. But I think if we could broaden that through some sort of, at least regional or, national agenda that would be a great way to start.

I think another thing that I would like to see from the scholarly folks is something—I'm reminded of a lecture I heard from a history professor who said the way you figure out whether something is important is to picture what the world would be like if [the event] had not happened. Given the way community colleges have come on the scene at different times, for different reasons, there might be a chance to look at that historically and say what impact have community colleges had when they come in. And also look at what kinds of outcomes come when you get different funding models. Do places that really fund community colleges well, get more of a benefit than those who don't? Some of those kinds of things that get at the broader issue of are community colleges irrelevant or not, would really be very helpful and the kinds of things that probably would only happen at a university setting.

I think another thing I would recommend is getting away from some of the community college stuff. If we can develop this idea of K-16 research. The way I see it now, we point our fingers at the K-12 people and complain about students not being prepared when they come to us and the universities do the same to us. Everybody's kind of pointing. What makes sense is to get all of those people together and say, "How do we work on this"? And have an agenda that covers education, rather than splintering ourselves off—that may be a long way off.

For my pet peeves that I mentioned earlier, I think a lot of the people who are in the college of education in graduate programs because they want to be community college administrators. They want to be a president, or a dean or something, would be better served if the program were very rigorous in terms of scholarship and cut out the idea of doing a research based dissertation. I got a call from somebody doing research on college transfer and they wanted a copy of study I had done ten years ago. I said, "Well, I can send you that, but in truth right now every time I do a presentation I make fun of how naïve I was back then to use that methodology and we're doing something different [now]". The response is "I don't care—this is for my dissertation". So he's taking something that I had done with another college, [and is] going to do the same thing with a community college and another university as a dissertation and not even bother to do what I was doing now with them.

I've heard that too many times—that this is a ticket to get out. I think if we had people in these positions doing a research paper, in terms of the scholarly research, and held to a standard of say, publishing it in a refereed research review, we would have administrators that are much more tuned in to looking at research and what it can do for them, than if we force them into this mode that is not really serving us well right now.

- **KD:** I'd like to underscore one of Mike's suggestions. I think of trying to pull together people at community colleges to be able to do multi-institutional studies. I think it's crucial. It's pretty clear that a lot of research, really at this point, to get published, and really to have validity, has to be multi-institutional. And it would be great to have



community college faculty and institutional researcher be able to do that—pulling together studies that they’re doing, each at their sites. And maybe not even relying on other people to broker the relationship, but you’d almost go out and hire them. You know, [say] we’ll direct that, we’ll bring you in as our consultants—so that they can keep more control over the research.

A couple of other things that struck me, to build on Steve’s point about IPEDS. It occurs to me that maybe this is being done, but I haven’t been aware of it—we haven’t really, to my mind, carefully caught when a new federal data set was about to come out, and really made sure that community college items are on it. For example, BPS—Beginning Postsecondary Survey—to what degree does it really adequately capture things that are of concern to us studying community college students. And to be there present at the creation to make sure that the right items get on. Similar to Wynn’s. Wynn’s 88 is out of the barn, but for the purpose we were raising before—continuing education students—if there’s ever going to be further follow-up is making sure that items are on it to catch people farther down the process. I’m going to get the acronym wrong, but the National Household Survey, looking at adult learners—I can’t remember who fields that and I don’t know how good the items are, but for continuing education purposes, has it been carefully essayed to make sure it has the items on it that could be really useful in our research in tracking what’s going on community college students?

The other idea that occurred to me, building on what Deborah was saying is would it be possible to find a way to have state agencies, deposit maybe with AACC or another intermediary, state data sets that could then freely be available to researchers? Something like the ICPPR at Michigan, and maybe institutional data sets. That intermediary could perhaps redo the data sets to get them into comparable form, or may say that it will have to be in a certain form for us to accept it for deposit. But what we might be able to start doing is constructing a very rich data set. It would put AACC, or some other intermediary body, in a good position to be able to keep track of usage; maybe to form relationships. You know “So and so, and so and so, and so and so have been calling up to use these data sets. You might want to get in touch with them”. There might be some very interesting ways that we could start connecting people with the research.

- **DB:** I’m going to talk about four ideas here. Barbara called them pathways and I do look at these as opportunities. Some of the characteristics that we’ve described create opportunities for us. One of those is that many of us are generalists. Many of us do have experience in the secondary education system, or K-12, in the community college, in higher education. Those experiences across systems are what I think are putting us right in the middle of the K-16 policy issues that are emerging.

I know I’ve taken advantage of my experience as a teacher in junior high school and high school. My study of community college, and now my work in higher education has provided a lot of unique opportunities to think about student transition across those systems. So there’s a very, I think, exciting area that’s emerging around student transition. Looking at alternative models and approaches; who gains access; who’s prepared for college level coursework; what impact various policies, structural changes,



programmatic, or curricula changes will have on providing access to more students who need to gain access to college—that's an area that I'm very passionate about and I think it provides a lot of opportunities and I encourage a lot of you to think about doing research in that area.

A second opportunity has been mentioned, but I just want to reinforce that, and that is the partnerships that we can form with practitioners in the community college. Some of those folks may have been our students, and our graduates, and some of those people are researchers, like Mike, who look to us. I like the concept of research sensitive practitioners and practice sensitive researchers. I think when you think about roles that way; you begin to think about bridges and networks. I've been lucky enough to direct a couple of national studies that have engaged practitioners as researchers over time and building relationships where we can do site visits and we can research together. I have found those experiences to be extremely rewarding experiences. Those are some of the projects that I look back on with the most fond memories

The third area, because I want to give some credit here—I think at this meeting, we have seen some really exciting presentations we have seen new definitions, models, new practices, theoretical frameworks that we had not seen before. And a lot of the people are here—Frankie, and Linda, and Barbara, and Kevin—and I just want to thank you because this has been a really exciting meeting. It gives us that spark, that motivation for each of us to look for those new ways of thinking about this field because, obviously, we care about it a lot or we wouldn't be here.

The last thing is, I think we just need to get a whole bunch more smart people more engaged in this field, and maybe more conversations like this; more organizations and more active involvement of folks in the Council for the Study of the Community College, which is a growing organization, and [one] in which we have a really exciting meeting in a couple of weeks in Seattle. That's going to be a terrific experience seeing that organization almost double, or maybe more in terms of interest in presenting research. There's a lot more that I could say, but there are a lot of opportunities and I think the future is very bright, so hopefully we'll end on a positive note.

- SC: I want to just briefly say—I don't want to repeat areas we've already covered. I will say, from my perspective, we add to the research database the same way caves are formed—one little stalactite and stalagmite at a time. We get some breakthrough studies, but by and large that's how it's done. And that's why, focusing on IPEDS is so important. One major change that's occurred with the advent of Pentium III and IV computers is all of a sudden you can download the IPEDS database wherever you are. So the fact that that database is not as good as it could be is more important today than it used to be, but if we can fix that and involve some of these other new, emerging databases, as Kevin noted, the possibilities for involving statisticians and others to do that higher order analysis that Barbara referred to a little bit ago, are absolutely awesome.

We need to think, within our institutions, about how can involve the research and measurement faculty in our work. That's something internal. I think there's a great need

for more inter-institutional studies. It's worth noting that this is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the work *Progress and Prospect: Junior College*, by Wheelan Metzger, which was an inter-institutional study—we need more of that kind of work. I think that we can take the interest in K-16 functions as a vehicle to have a discussion about community college mission and function. I can tell you from my own work with rural community colleges that Art Cohen has said there are five functions of the community colleges—general ed, transfer, vocational education, community services, continuing education, and developmental education. I would argue K-16 linkages is something I found in my work in rural community colleges which is, I think, a pretty significant finding. I know that's going on in a lot of the urban settings too. I think that's important.

The effort by the different accrediting bodies to go through Ballbridge models of re-accreditation is going to push them into wanting more peer analyses across institutional types. North Central and SACCS have led the way on this. I look for the other associations to follow. That's, in my view quite good, because it doesn't to compare a Miami-Dade Community College with a East Mississippi Community College. They do very different things.

To conclude, we need a lot more people like you. Like Deborah, I share the excitement that I hear today.

**-BT:** A couple more thoughts. One thing in terms of possibilities is the availability of large national databases through NCES, like IPEDS and NPSAS—the National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey, etc., that we can use so that we can have these national studies. Plus, you may be aware that there is training available to use those through AIR, the Association of Institutional Research. It's competitive, but they will fund you to come to DC for a week to learn how to use these datasets and give you CD-ROMs with the sets on them, so that's a great opportunity if you're interested in national studies.

Another kind of dataset that's available is, [you have to have] institutional membership to get this, you can join the National Student Loan Clearinghouse, so that any of their students who have ever gotten loans are in this dataset and you can then track your students after they leave your institution to see where they transfer to. Including out of state, including to private institutions—the kind of tracking, as I said, that's difficult to do if you're just using your own state's database.

Another possibility that I hope happens—and this has come up in a couple of sessions elsewhere at this conference, and I think was alluded to a couple of times today—I really hope that we can start using better lenses to look at the two-year college [and] not use four-year lenses which then result—that's a kind of deficit model approach for community colleges because they're never seen as [being] as good as four-year schools. We need to develop our two-year lenses and paradigms through which to look at these institutions.

And finally, another possibility is just this—that this is actually happening. That we have the opportunity to hear one another. And I think the synergy that's been developed here is wonderful. And I want to give credit to Linda Haggidorn for this. She is Program Chair for Division J. She is the one—this is an invited panel, she invited us to do this. And I really want to thank for making this happen Linda.

Comments or thoughts, or anything you want to say about research on the community college.

- I'm Bill Maxwell, I'm on the faculty at the University of Southern California. I think that this is a fairly unusual kind of event. We owe, as you've said, a great deal of thanks to Linda, to Frankie, and some others who have focused community college discussions here at this AERA meeting. I think that we're going to have to do something as a network, though, to make sure that it continues. Even though CSCC is flourishing, still in other fields—especially the physical scientists—are institutional networks basically. [They support] cultural and social relations among them in a way that support ongoing programs of basic research.

Though I do think we need to, as several of the panel and in the audience have suggested, we need to be very sensitive to practice. We need, really, a couple of decades of very basic work, clarifying what some of the important conceptual issues are for community colleges, as you were saying, rather than just using four-year models. I would like to ask the audience and the panel, what you think we could do, as a network of researcher, what do we need to do beyond having annual meetings through CSCC and occasionally with this support we gotten this year?

- [?]: I was privileged to be part of a small group for the Council of Community College Presidents and Past-Presidents, we were discussing AACC leadership down in Tampa a month ago, and one of the things that came up was the notion that if we could just simply create, electronically, a roster of all the people who are interested in faculty issues in community colleges, or the people interested in the strand related to finance, and think about the different strands, you might be able to link each other up better. There has to be some ways. I do believe there is a great need for a limited pot of money, be it from the feds or some other source that supports some types of studies on community colleges. Again, Linda is a pioneer for us. Her grant on research related community college is in my view one of the first FIPSE grants that's related to research—an OAI grant, rather. What I'm saying is that's something new. We haven't had a lot of that at the same level. So those are some ideas I have on that.

- **BT:** And I might point out that Mike Quanee, I don't know if he said this, is a recipient of a FIPSE grant and the research you did on that is really very well known—about this core space model of transfer success.

- I'm Vanessa Smith Morris and I guess, as we're talking about figuring out a way to build a stronger network of community college researchers, I should put in a plug for the Community College Research Center, Teacher's College because this is certainly the

direction I'm hoping we'll move in. Right now I'm in a fairly new role there, coordinating this effort, but I am brainstorming ways I can do this. I hope you'll contact Deborah, Kevin, or myself if you do have ideas. A couple of the things that I'm working on right now [involve] thinking about way of increasing the number of publications we put out, in terms of doing some less formal publications—white papers, that sort of thing. Another thing that's kind of in the works is potentially a Teacher's College Record Issue—a special issue on community colleges. So that would be a nice thing, if we're able to get that one nailed down. Other than that, I'm definitely in the thinking stage, but I'd really encourage you to start trying to think about the Community College Research Center as a potential clearinghouse for our research, and a network center for research on community colleges.

- **MQ:** One of the things we tried at the SACCR meeting this year was to talk about how to make some of this happen. We had some workshops and people started talking about different things. We're going to try and pick up that theme again at this meeting but I've been thinking about it myself since then and I would like to encourage you to think of some ideas. [For example] if we could look at a way to get some funding sources that would allow some of you all to have summer institutes or something, where you bring community college researchers together around an interest in a problem, design a methodology that would work for everybody, and then send us out to do something like that where you'd have interested people and probably talented people that don't get a chance to do that kind of thing. I think a lot of us who are mired in the details would welcome some way to do that, but we need to get crowbarred out of our office some way to do it. So if somebody could provide some seed funding for something like that or occasional sabbaticals or something, I think we could have a lot of good synergistic kind of programs develop that way.

Another thing that I think would be good—one of your comments brought that up about the teaching and learning and the instructional strategies. I'm really struck by this at the community colleges because we have what I consider [as one of] the major challenges in higher education in reaching students and trying to make them successful and then [I] go to conferences and hear how universities are doing things like learning communities, where they put students with common interests in the same classes and in dorm rooms together and everything, and I'm thinking "Here are the best and brightest students in the world getting all this support", and I look at my class of 40 people, maybe 30 of whom are there today, and think "God, if I only had those kinds of resources".

We actually tried a learning community at our college with the most needy students we could find. We had students at the lowest level that we would accept in reading, writing, and arithmetic—and I'm talking arithmetic. They were taking our Math 01, which is what it sounds like—it's very basic. We were able to create a learning community with them by placing them in the same developmental classes and having a counselor assigned to them who did a lot of the study skills things and everything. It was incredibly successful with this group. We did follow-ups and everything, and then the counselor left and the program got hurt [by] budget cuts. What we could use a lot of help with is how do you transfer some of these kinds of things into a community college setting where the

challenges are so great? My ideas now are with the new technologies, we can create some of these virtually, that we hadn't thought about before. I see that as a real convergence of opportunities. We have some great models that work at four-year colleges that just can't logistically be done the same way at community colleges, but maybe we could develop some kinds of models like that.

- **BT:** I really appreciate that you've been here with us for two hours. We're so thrilled with your interest in the community college. Thank you all for being here.



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